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IACP Annual Conference Issue

**U.S. Department of Justice  
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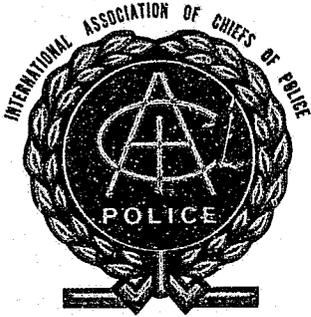
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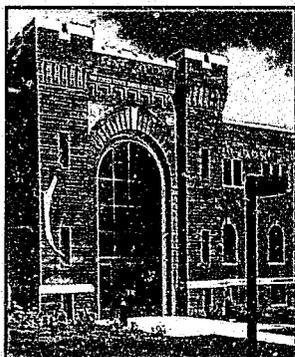
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## Expectation and Opportunity in the Planning and Design of Police Facilities

By HERBERT B. ROTH, AIA, Roth & Sheppard Architects, Denver, Colorado

**T**rying to reach immediate solutions to problems when faced with a project as complex as a new or re-modeled facility is wrong, since the usual source is to identify what appears to be the major problem and begin addressing solutions to it before it is really understood.

*"Our present space is too small  
... make it bigger."*

On the surface, this appears to be a logical solution. However, if it is accepted at face value, without fully exploring all possibilities, one runs the risk of starting off incorrectly.

Begin instead by considering the following essential facts related to planning, design and construction of police facilities:

- It is rare that a police official will have the opportunity to design a new facility more than once in a lifetime.
- The planning process is an opportunity to objectively review the way your department operates.
- It is an opportunity to identify and understand all the problems that may have led you to the decision of initiating the project.
- It is a project whose process is somewhat foreign to you and you probably don't know what to expect.
- The end result will be a facility that will last 15 to 20 years and will not be able to be changed significantly without the outlay of large sums of money.

### Programming

The next step after absorbing these sobering facts is to begin the programming phase. At this point in the project, one is faced with the readily apparent problem of space requirements and the inclination to proceed with a space needs study. While this is a critical ingredient in the programming phase, it alone will not solve the total problem.

Specifically, if inherent problems exist in the department's organization and/or operation, they will affect the needs

assessment and planning relationships, as well as the efficiency and competence of the department. It is wrong to believe that satisfying space needs projections alone will result in a successful facility.

Programming is a process wherein each aspect of the project is analyzed—not only the physical restraints, but the details of operations, maintenance, management, budget and security.

Project leaders can and should expect to break down the organization and examine it in detail, since this process may well lead to more efficient use of space and the overall space needs projections.

Resolving operational goals will determine if and how operational revisions are made and what effect they will have on the facility.

Management goals will identify how the flow of data, documents, property, evidence, programs and supplies are managed.

Maintenance goals will not only define how the facility will be cared for, but will directly affect the choice of materials and the budget for construction.

Security goals will analyze the levels of security desired, the associated systems to be considered and the method by which security will be monitored.

Analyzing the project budget from the very start and relating it to the quantity and quality of space will help avoid unwanted surprises.

Expect all this to be a difficult task. The project manager assigned to the project is a police officer asked to perform a complicated, methodological process. Many impartial decisions will have to be made in the process. He must have the responsibility and authority to say yes or no to staff requests. The project will require full-time (if not overtime) effort and will educate the officer in the technical aspects of mechanical and electrical service, acoustics, equipment, furnishings, lighting and finishes, in addition to the departmental space and adjacency requirements.

Expect a police programming and design consultant to be involved, not from a dictating or review position, but as an active team participant. Expect the consultant to live at your site until this phase of the project is completed. Allowing a consultant to accept initial data and go off without the benefit of continuous interaction with the project and project manager will result in discontinuity, delay and the inability to develop personal team relationships.

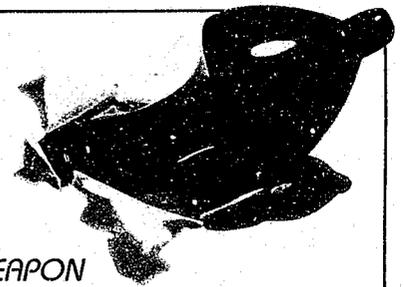
**While the project manager becomes fluent in the processes inherent to the design of the facility, the consultant broadens his knowledge of the organization and operation of police functions. A close-knit relationship between these key members of the design team is critical to the success of the project.**

The completed program—the foundation for a successful design project—is a working document that will change and evolve as its analytic input is synthesized into design. The project manager must continue in the role of the owner's representative and work through the design process, using the program as a continual check. The initial phase of the design project is critical. Similar to the program phase, the consultant must be required to live with this initial phase until the design direction, including flow and adjacencies, is set and agreed upon by the project team. At this phase, expect daily work sessions to provide the feedback and approval required.

Expectations and opportunities will continue throughout the design phase. The project manager and consultant will establish a working relationship critical to the success of the project. Expect the project manager to become fluent in the processes inherent to the design of the facility. Conversely, the consultant must be fluent in the organization and operation of police functions. The close-knit working relationship and mutual understanding of these key members of the design team are critical to the success of the project. ★

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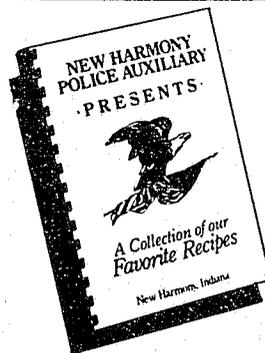
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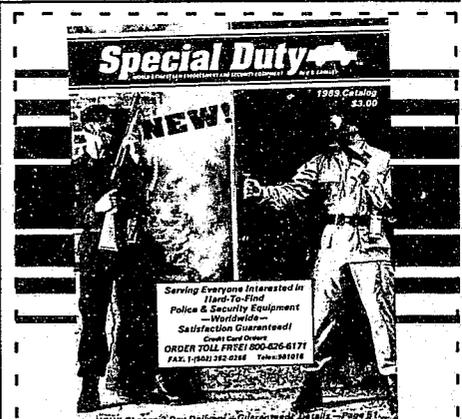
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